



Romans 1

1. Those who are truly “set apart for the gospel of God” as imitators of “Paul” the “apostle” possess a message that teaches both Jews and Gentiles receive salvation through:

1.1. faith/vows of allegiance or loyalty (to King Jesus) (14-17) “from faith [for the “Jew”] to [Gk., *eis* = An indication of scope, 1Th 2:16] faith [for the “Greek” or the “barbarians”] = Everyone now gains their right standing w/God (i.e., the “power of salvation” or “the righteousness of God”) the same way – thru belief/faith. *This was a major change in respect to both who and how salvation was gained.* In the past, it was to the Jew (exclusively) and according to the “works of the law” (i.e. circumcision - the sign given to Abraham and passed on thru Moses as necessary for entrance into covenant w/God and receiving forgiveness/cleansing thru its corollaries – separation and sacrifice; Rom 2:25-29, 3:1, 3:23-21, 4:1-12; See also Eph 2:11-22; 1Co 7:19; Gal 2:1-16, 5:2, 6:15; Gen 17:9-14). Paul’s emphasis on this aspect of salvation is in defense of what was decided at Jerusalem council (Act 15:1-11).

1.1.1. Faith as a vow of allegiance or loyalty to King Jesus: In the 1st century, the word [Gk., *pistis*] faith was not only used to communicate belief or trust, but also allegiance or loyalty. For example in Josephus: “*The inhabitants of this city determined to continue in their allegiance [pistis] to the Romans.*” (The Life, 104). According to David M. Hay, 62% of the time *pistis* in Josephus refers to allegiance or a vow of loyalty (“*Pistis* as a ‘Ground for Faith’ in Hellenized Judaism and Paul”).

1.1.2. The strong connection between allegiance/loyalty and faith in the first century mind is the reason *pistis* in the NT is often translated as “faithfulness,” a synonym for allegiance or loyalty (e.g., Rom 3:3; Gal 5:22).

1.1.3. Key passages dealing with salvation where *pistis* clearly refers to allegiance or loyalty (versus belief or trust): 1) (Mat 8:9-10) = The centurion expresses allegiance/loyalty to Jesus in the same way his soldiers show allegiance/loyalty to him. Jesus views this as the ideal form of saving *pistis* [faith] in Himself. 2) (Act 26:18) = Paul defines *pistis* [faith] as turning “from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God” – i.e., as a change in one’s allegiance. Hence the reason faith always includes repentance (v19-20, “repent” = turning from sin and Satan). We turn from our former allegiances (“repent” [Grk., *metanoia*] = to turn) so that we can “turn to God” (give our allegiance to Him).

1.1.4. Allegiance or loyalty as the correct understanding of *pistis* [faith] – especially when in reference to Jesus, is also supported by the biblical concept of love for God/Jesus. It is allegiance or loyalty that is the primary focus (Joh 14:15).

1.1.5. At the very least then, what must be included in our understanding of *pistis* [faith] is that it communicates more than simple belief or trust. It communicates also our intention of allegiance or loyalty. And this faith-sworn allegiance/loyalty is viewed by God as a sacred pledge/binding vow (1Pe 3:21 “appeal” [Gk., *heperowteyma*] = Sacred pledge/binding vow).

1.2. faithfulness/faithful obedience (5)= Paul’s mission as an apostle (the reason (5) he was “granted apostleship”) was to see that those coming into the NC by “faith”(a sacred vow of loyalty to King Jesus) were now following that up w/the corresponding obedience so that God’s name would not be blasphemed by the world (“to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among the nations”)(Rom 2:23-24 = Blasphemy of God is the result of disobedience by His people). That Paul is indeed calling for obedience as an additional condition of salvation (versus calling for people to obey by believing – e.g., Luther/Evangelicals) is confirmed by:

1.2.1. who it includes – i.e., those who already possessed faith or were already believers - the Christians at Rome (6-13 “including you who are [already] called to belong to Jesus Christ...to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace...your faith is proclaimed in all the world...I long to see you that...we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith both yours and mine...I do not want you to be unaware brothers”). Why include those who have already put faith in Christ if this is what is meant by “to bring about the obedience of faith?”

1.2.2. its agreement w/the ministry of the resurrected Jesus (Mat 28:18-20 = Teach [or “bring about...obedience” in] those who possess “faith” [i.e. those you are “baptizing”]) and the messianic prophecies of the OT (1-4; Isa 2:1-5 w/Joh 3:16-21 and Mat 5:17-20; also 1Jo 1:4//Isa 11:1-5 and Mal 4:1-6 w/Luk 3:1-22, 16:15-17//Isa 42:1-7, 21 w/Luk 4:18//Isa 56:1-8 w/Deu 4:13 w/Mat 21:13//Isa 66:18-21 w/Eze 44:23-24 w/Mat 16:17-19 and Joh 20:21-23 also Eph 4:11).

1.2.3. its OT precedent (Gen 22:1-18 = Abe's faith needed to be followed up by/completed by obedience – see Jam 2:21-24 = James confirms this to be the proper understanding of Gen 22).

2. Ending up under the delusion of Martin Luther or his false gospel of faith alone is what happens when:

2.1. you determine the thesis (of the book of Romans) based on your own agenda (or personal problems) versus its book-ends (Rom 1:17 – “no more works only faith” [against Rome] versus Rom 1:5 and 16:26 - “what I am going to tell you [obedience needs to follow faith], what I told you [obedience needs to follow faith]”//focus of the chapters proves this true also: faith = ch 1 [mentioned], 3-5 [total = 3^{1/4} chs]; faithful obedience = ch 1 [most], 2, 6-16 [total = 12^{3/4} chs]).
*How Luther felt at the end of his life about the gospel he had invented: *“since the downfall of Popery and the cessations of excommunications and spiritual penalties, the people have learned to despise the word of God. They no longer care for the churches; they have ceased to fear and honor God...After throwing off the yoke of the Pope, everyone wishes to live as he pleases. [They say] ‘we will spend the day like Lutherans. Drunkenness has come upon us like a deluge.’ If God had not closed my eyes, and if I had foreseen these scandals, I would never have begun to teach [my] gospel.”*

2.2. you ignore the historical or Jewish context of its communication and replace – or read into it, your own (Joh 4:22 w/Zec 8:23; e.g., 1] THE CHANGE ARGUMENT: either you have changed your god or God has changed [Deu 29:18-19 w/Deu 13:1-11 and Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8]; 2] “works of the law” = Me trying to work my way to heaven versus the Jewish understanding of the clean laws/those laws related to “vertical justice”).

2.3. you fail to understand the violation of justice this position creates (e.g., the CONFLATION ARGUMENT: 1] two forms of justice in the OT: vertical [passover/propitiatory sacrifice] and horizontal [penalty/punishment], 2] horizontal must be completed for God to accept our vertical offering [Lev 6:1-7; Mat 5:21-24], 3] Jesus is only identified as fulfilling vertical justice [Joh 1:29 w/Rom 3:23-25 = propitiatory substitute NOT penal substitute], 4] Penal substitution is illegal [Eze 18:1-20; Lev 27:29; Num 35:33-34], 5] Horizontal justice remains our responsibility if we are to get to heaven [1Jo 3:7-10; Luk 19:1-10; 2Co 5:9-10]).

3. Jesus is both fully man and fully God (3-4).

4. The way we as Christians can “impart...some spiritual gift to strengthen” our brothers and sisters or be “mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” or “reap a (spiritual) harvest among them is by seeing that each of us are adding the necessary obedience God requires to our faith (5 w/11-13; 1Jo 5:1-3 = Obedience to God’s commands is how we love and strengthen one another; [2Jo 1:4-6; 3Jo 1:4] = John was encouraged by their obedience).

5. Why we should all be eager to “preach the gospel” (of allegiance-faith and faithful obedience) - versus being “ashamed of the gospel” (15-16a) is b/c:

5.1. through such faith all people can now receive God’s righteousness (or a right standing with God) (Again, God’s salvation is no longer exclusive to the Jews or requiring a person become a Jew thru circumcision) (16-17).

5.2. through such obedience all people can avoid God’s angry “wrath”, against all forms of disobedience (18-20 = suppression of obvious truth, 21 = Disrespect and ungratefulness toward God, 22-23, 25 = Idolatry and narcissism) which includes the curses of sexual perversion (24, 26-27 “dishonoring their bodies” and “dishonorable passions” – i.e., homosexuality), mental illness (28 “debased mind”), anarchy (29-31) and the death penalty (32 “those who practice such things deserve to die”).

6. A society (therefore) filled with homosexuality, mental illness, anarchy and a rescinding of the death penalty is what happens when the obedience portion of the gospel is made nice but not necessary (32).

7. Stupid is a moral choice before it becomes a mental condition (21-22).

8. That something is “eternal” (i.e. There is an Unmoved/Prime Mover), and that this something is someone or “divine” (i.e. It is an eternal Person versus and eternal force) is “plain” to everyone (God has “shown it to them”) since it is “clearly perceived in “the creation of the world” or “in the things that have been made” (i.e. The universe points to intelligent/deliberate design versus accidental evolution) which means all atheists, agnostics and idolators are idiots “without an excuse” (19-20).